

**MINUTES**  
**CHICOPEE MOBILE HOME PARK RENT CONTROL BOARD**  
**JUNE 20, 2011 @ 6:00 P.M.**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Robert Hopkins, Sharyn Riley, Ronald Lafond

**ALSO PRESENT**

Christine Lessing-Provost, Attorney to the Board  
Chantal Paul, Secretary to the Board

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Robert Hopkins:** First order of business is a motion on the minutes as distributed from our last meeting of June 13<sup>th</sup>, do we have a motion to approve as distributed?

**Sharyn Riley:** I make a motion to approve minutes.

**Ronald Lafond:** I second motion. **Motion passes unanimously.**

**Robert Hopkins:** The second would be under old business I have an order of business that I acted on between meetings and that is a letter was sent to Mayor Bissonnette requesting that he bring our Board up to the full five (5) members and copies were emailed to all members of the Board. That request is in with the Mayor waiting for their action, I have not heard anything but we officially had filed it.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Robert Hopkins:** The next thing on the agenda is new business and the order of new business that I have is that we received on May 23<sup>rd</sup> a request for Initial Meeting for the following parks from Marcia Stemm, the owner of Gill Park, Knollwood Estates and Harmony Homes, and this meeting is the one tonight. The first order of business is to read the Rules, as required; these Rules are also available on the City website.

Robert Hopkins reads Rules...

**Robert Hopkins:** We have three (3) parks coming before us tonight, that's Gill, Knollwood and Harmony Homes. So this is the Initial Meeting where we give you the information so that you know how to proceed from here. We need to set a date for your hearing. The first date we need to make known is the date by which you have to send it to all the tenants and the Board, and today is the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, so you have to send it by no later than July 20<sup>th</sup> you have to send each of us a copy and each of the tenants a copy of your proposal, each of the tenants to each of the parks.

**Marcia Stemm:** And I need to certify that I've done that?

**Robert Hopkins:** You do not need to send us certified mail but you need to certify to us that you have done so, okay, so a letter from your corporations to...

**Christine Lessing Provost:** It has to be signed under the pains and penalties of perjury.

**Robert Hopkins:** Right, and from July 20<sup>th</sup> the tenants have thirty (30) additional days which makes it August 19<sup>th</sup>. You have to respond with any evidence or proposals or anything you want us to consider at the hearing date, it has to be in writing sent to us by that date. Is that understood?

**Tenants:** Yes.

**Robert Hopkins:** We can't take anything after that date. You have a full thirty (30) days to review what she sends out to all of you and comment on and send it back to us in writing. We then need to set a date no sooner than...

**Christine Lessing Provost:** It can't be any earlier than ninety (90) days.

**Robert Hopkins:** It can't be any earlier than ninety (90) days from tonight. That gives you time to look things over.

So we are looking at October for a hearing date. We have another hearing scheduled for October 3<sup>rd</sup> so that's not going to work.

**Christine Lessing Provost:** The following Monday after that is Columbus Day, which is a holiday.

**Robert Hopkins:** Right. How about Monday, October 17<sup>th</sup>. So we're going to have that hearing to make a decision on the rent increase on Monday night, October 17, 2011 @ 6:00 here. The order in which we'll take those are going to be as they were submitted. The Gill Park, Knollwood and then Harmony Homes. I don't know if you want to set specific times Counselor?

**Christine Lessing Provost:** No because we don't know how long it's going to take for each side.

**Robert Hopkins:** Right, we're going to try to do all three (3) of them that night and if we go over, we will have to table it. You can speak at that meeting but the evidence has to be into us to review. Is everyone clear on that?

**Tenant:** (inaudible) snow???

**Christine Lessing Provost:** Can I make a comment?

**Robert Hopkins:** Yes.

**Christine Lessing Provost:** This Board is merely for rent and only for rent. Anything not associated with the rent adjustment, if you have complaints about the condition of the park, whether the grass is being mowed, whether it's been plowed, has absolutely nothing to do with this Board and we will not listen to any of those complaints because they are not within our jurisdiction. You have to deal directly with the owner of the park on any concerns relating to the grounds themselves or complaints you may have. Just so that everybody's clear on that because when we have the hearing whatever paperwork you present in writing is what's going to be given as evidence. You can get up here and say they didn't plow four times last year, that doesn't matter to us; it has nothing to do with us. We can't control any of that. We can ONLY set rent, that's all. If you're going to get an attorney, I suggest you do not wait until the last minute because he's going to need time to put paperwork together.

**Tenant:** Do we have the right to know beforehand on how much they want to raise it?

**Robert Hopkins:** Yes, I believe that's contained in what she's going to send out within the next thirty (30) days, correct?

**Christine Lessing Provost:** I believe it was in the letter that she mailed...

**Marcia Stemm:** Finds letter stating rent increase amount...reads letter to tenant, increase of \$8.86, that's you, you're \$8.86.

**Christine Lessing Provost:** So is everybody clear on the dates? The owner has thirty (30) days, tenants; you have an additional thirty (30) days once you receive the packet from the owner. Everything has to be brought to the Law Department, if it's a day late, it will not be considered, it has to be time-stamped at the Law Department.

**Robert Hopkins:** Any other new business come in Chantal?

**Chantal Paul:** No.

**Robert Hopkins:** Alright, do I hear a motion to...the one remaining issue that came up is that we need to create a form for whoever is requesting the rent increase or decrease, be it tenant or owner, to submit a form with the application stating that they've notified the tenants or the other party.

**Sharyn Riley:** So moved, I'll make a motion.

**Ronald Lafond:** Second the motion.

**Robert Hopkins:** Any discussion, all those in favor, motion carries. **Motion passes unanimously.**

**Tenant:** If we have problems with our roads, inaudible 20%.

**Robert Hopkins:** Well, we look at the proposal based upon what they submitted to us for evidence, and if you have something that counters that, then you need to put it in writing and send it to us for consideration. But if it's a problem with something not being done, that's not really within our jurisdiction, that's a tenant/landlord issue that you need to bring up to the owner, that's not through our Board. The City of Chicopee has a Home Rule Legislation as many communities in Massachusetts do that set rent control for mobile home parks. Not every city or town has rent control for mobile home parks and they can charge whatever they want. But our city, Springfield and a few others have this rule to make sure that it's fair, and our job is to look at the fairness of an increase or decrease in rent to both parties. Are there any further questions about procedure?

**Sharyn Riley:** I make a motion to adjourn.

**Ronald Lafond:** I second the motion.

Motion to adjourn @ 6:25 p.m.